

## **2003 Severe Weather Summary**

### **Northwest Kansas**

#### **National Weather Service, Goodland, KS**

2003 was a fairly quiet severe weather year in northwest Kansas. 230 reports of severe weather were received during the year, but no serious flooding occurred, and all 13 tornadoes reported were weak and produced little damage. The first severe report of the year was logged on April 3<sup>rd</sup> as hail fell in Norton county. The last report arrived on October 13<sup>th</sup>, when strong thunderstorm winds near 70 mph swept through Sherman and Thomas counties.

April and May were quiet. Only 15 wind and hail reports were received during the entire month of May. The most noteworthy early season event occurred May 8<sup>th</sup>, when collapsing thunderstorms sent an intense downburst surging eastward. A swath of 70 mph winds was reported along I-70 producing tree and sign damage in Sherman and Thomas counties.

The month of June was active. Severe weather occurred on 11 days with 92 reports of wind, hail and tornadoes filed. June 1<sup>st</sup> has been called the attack of the landspouts. Ten weak tornadoes developed during the early afternoon hours, with three in Sherman county and seven occurring just across the state line in eastern Colorado. These tornadoes developed when a stationary surface boundary interacted with a thunderstorm outflow. The collision resulted in intense updrafts above the boundary, spinning up numerous tornadoes, some lasting 15 minutes. Two other tornadoes occurred northwest of Hill City in Graham county on the 9<sup>th</sup>. June finished out the month with baseball size hail on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> in Decatur, Logan and Greeley counties.

In July, storm spotters, law enforcement and the general public called in 40 severe events to the Goodland office. These were mostly wind and hail, but northern Cheyenne county was on the receiving end of three weak tornadoes during the month, with two occurring on the 6<sup>th</sup> and one on the 21<sup>st</sup>. One event which stands out in July is a heat burst which developed over Wallace and Logan counties and moved north into Sherman and Thomas counties during the evening hours of the 5<sup>th</sup>. It produced damage to barns, trees and power poles, and resulted in numerous traffic accidents as winds gusted over 70 mph and lowered visibility in blowing dirt. A heat burst is an intense thunderstorm downdraft accompanied by pronounced warming. Temperatures rose to 94 degrees at 9:30 in the evening as the strong winds arrived.

In August, no tornadoes were logged, although 34 wind and hail reports were received, including one big day in the early morning hours on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Thunderstorms intensified rapidly as they moved southeast from Thomas into Logan counties. Measured winds of 85 mph occurred in Colby, and estimated gusts over 90 mph produced damage to a church in Oakley.

Only four severe weather days were reported after September 1<sup>st</sup>, with golfball size hail falling in Gove county on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, and 70 mph winds near Goodland on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

**KANSAS SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK**  
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